

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 are pending in the present application. Claims 3-5 have been cancelled in accordance with a Response to Restriction Requirement filed November 7, 2002. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute non-elected Claims 3-5 in a divisional application. The Specification has been amended to correct typographical errors. No new matter is added. The rejections are respectfully traversed in light of the following remarks, and reconsideration is requested.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. 1.84(p)(4) because reference characters "32" and "70" have both been used to designate a "pipe member." An attached Request to Amend Drawings includes proposed drawing corrections. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamaguchi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,450,573) in view of Pajon et al. (6,050,635).

Statement of Common Ownership

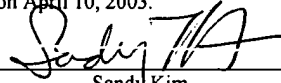
The present Application No. 09/976,324 and U.S. Patent No. 6,450,573 to Yamaguchi et al. were, at the time the invention of Application 09/976,324 was made, owned by, or subject to an obligation of assignment to, NHK Spring Co., Ltd. Thus, U.S. Patent No. 6,450,573 should be disqualified as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) against the claims of the present Application.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

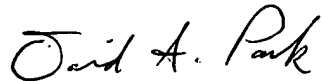
For the above reasons, Applicants believe pending Claims 1-2 are now in condition for allowance and allowance of the Application is hereby solicited. If the Examiner has any questions or concerns, the Examiner is hereby requested to telephone Applicants' Attorney at (949) 752-7040.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on April 10, 2003.


Sandy Kim

April 10, 2003
Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,



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ATTACHMENT A

The paragraph on page 4, starting on line 10, is amended as follows:

Figure 5 is a perspective view of the subassembly provided on the left [had] hand side of the seat frame;

The paragraph on page 5, starting on line 1, is amended as follows:

[Figure] Figures 18 [and 19] to 20 are perspective views showing different embodiments of the slip preventing member.

The paragraph starting on page 14, line 20, is amended as follows:

Figures 15 and 16 show an embodiment in which a plate member is stamp formed into a pipe member 84 having a rectangular or elliptic cross section so as to present a flattened engagement surface [85] 84a opposing the legs of the vehicle occupant and reduce the surface pressure by achieving a surface contact with the legs of the vehicle occupant. The two edges of the plate member may extend one next to the other in the manner of a depending flange 84b, and spot welded together to retain the tubular shape of the pipe member 84. This pipe member 84 is provided with a pair of ribs 84a extending in the axial direction on either side of the center of the pipe member 84, and a pair of notches 84c are provided in the depending flange 84b adjacent to the terminal ends thereof. The ribs 84a locally increase the resistance to the bending deformation of the pipe member 84 while the notches 84c locally decrease the resistance to the bending deformation. Therefore, this pipe member 84 is adapted to undergo a controlled and predicable bending deformation when subjected to a loading at the time of its deployment.